

We claim:

1. A method of managing an incoming call of a subscriber comprising:
ascertaining an online network status of the subscriber;
indicating an incoming call to the subscriber during an online operation; and
according to subscriber preferences, performing one of the step of (a) forwarding the incoming call to voicemail, (b) forwarding the incoming call to a forwarding number, and (c) activating an options selection menu to provide the subscriber with options to handle the incoming call, said options including at least one of forwarding the call to a specific number, handling the call via a VoIP service, and sending the call to voicemail.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises one of an IP network, an Ethernet, a LAN, and a WAN.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the ascertaining, indication, and performing steps occurs at one of a local exchange carrier, at a private branch exchange, or at equipment situated on the subscriber's premises.
4. The method of claim 1, further including storing the subscriber preferences in a memory where said preferences include at least one of a call forwarding number, a voicemail directive, and an Internet call waiting directive.

5. The method of claim 1, further including the step of dynamically enabling at least one of said indicating, forwarding, and activating in accordance with an on-line status of the subscriber.

6. A method of handling an incoming call on a telephone line occupied by a data terminal of a subscriber during an on-line network session of the subscriber, the method comprising:

recording a subscriber preference that indicates how an incoming call is to be handled,

ascertaining an online status of the subscriber;

notifying the subscriber of an incoming call via the subscriber's data terminal; and

according to the subscriber preference, performing one of the steps of (a) forwarding the incoming call to voicemail, (b) forwarding the incoming call to a forwarding number, and (c) activating an options selection menu to provide the subscriber with options to handle the incoming call, said options including at least one of forwarding the call to a specific number, handling the call via a VoIP service, and sending the call to voicemail.

7. A method of handling an incoming call on a line occupied by a data terminal of a subscriber during an on-line session of a network, the method comprising:

recording in a memory a subscriber preference defining how an incoming call is to be handled,

accessing the network to determine an online status of the subscriber;

notifying the subscriber of an incoming call via a display monitor associated with the data terminal; and

according to the subscriber preference, performing one of the steps of (a) forwarding the incoming call to voicemail according to the subscriber preference, (b) forwarding the incoming call to a forwarding number stored in the subscriber preference, and (c) activating an options selection menu to provide the subscriber with options to handle the incoming call, said options including at least one of forwarding the call to a specific number, handling the call via a VoIP service, and sending the call to voicemail.